

L E T T E R



Addressed to the PEOPLE shewing that a

Reform in Parliament,

Is Preferable to the

SINECURE SYSTEM.

John A. K.

THE Sinecure System is, in our political constitution, what an obstinate Virus is in the natural constitution; it infects the whole mass, and generates all kinds of disorders. The numerous abuses we deplore are, in reality, but so many indications, or symptoms, produced by this rooted disease; and he who thinks it may be easily expelled at any future convenient opportunity, is like a man in a galloping consumption, who is foolish enough to promise himself a cure from a simple evacuation, which he puts off till other affairs permit him to physic at his leisure. This poison having insinuated itself into the whole of the superior, or, what are called more noble parts of the body politic, has corrupted the national morals at their vital source, and is absorbed into the constitution itself, which it gradually undermines and consumes,—Surely there can be no greater marks of a rapid political DECLINE than to see the spirit of a free government made to bend to such prosecuting inquisitorial measures as are practised in despotic countries, whilst the number of the Friends of the constitution diminish daily, being driven in despair into the Republican Faction.

Among

Among Republican productions, the Rights of Man is accounted the most violent and dangerous, but whoever has read that work with impartiality will admit, that even the asperity of Mr. Paine seems to have arisen from a strong sense of the iniquity of pocketting the Public Money, without rendering any service in return : thus the Sinecure System gives birth to Republicanism, and then, like an unnatural Parent, would smother its own offspring.

When Mr. Paine rejected our constitution entirely, because he conceived it so infected with this vice, that a radical cure was not to be expected, he did but take Sinecure Placemen at their word, who are eternally representing that such a Reform would endanger the Constitution.

By this cry of ENDANGERING the CONSTITUTION, they hope to escape those boisterous moments, when the popular attention is directed to public wrongs ; and if they can weather these passing gales, they know they have nothing to fear in a calm. They act exactly as the Roman Church acted, when, venal and corrupt, like them, it strove to shield from a Reform, its traffic of Indulgences, and other lucrative iniquities.

The Roman Clergy then cried out, you will ENDANGER RELIGION. The Reformers replied, that they attacked Abuses, which were not only distinct from, but repugnant to the genuine spirit of Religion : and that far from pulling it down, their intention was to *purify* and *exalt* it. Still, however, the same cry was continued, in order to alarm the People in behalf of Religion. And this artifice of exciting an alarm, *a-pro-pos*, has foiled
Refor-

Reformation in certain Countries, and preserved Papistical frauds, to the astonishment of an enlightened age, from the thirteenth century, down to the present day. It is not long since that an attempt was made to suppress the Convents in the Low countries, on which the Clergy had recourse to their old expedient; and Monkish laziness triumphed there under pretence that Religion was in danger; as Sinecure Plunder triumphs elsewhere, under the pretence that the Constitution is in danger, with which it is in reality, as repugnant as Popish frauds are to the spirit of christianity.

As the Roman Clergy cared less to preserve the Unity of the christian church, than these profitable enormities, so our Sinecure Gentry are more attached to their Places than to the preservation of our Constitution. The one have always preferred driving men to Heresy, or even Atheism itself, rather than not have them such kind of christians as suited their purposes; the others would force the Friends of the Constitution to become Jacobins or Republican, rather than abandon a mode of government that suits theirs. They act as if it were less dangerous to expose the constitution to the shock of another Revolution, than to *purify* and *exalt* it in a pacific way.

If they really do fear a Revolution, it is because they are conscious they provoke one; but they must also be conscious, they have it in their power to prevent it.

There never yet was a Revolution, that was not provoked by ABUSES; nor one that might not have been avoided by their timely Correction. Where there are no Iniquities practised in a Government, the People are at Peace, and never think of Insur-

rections or Revolutions ; these violent and dangerous remedies being only dictated by Despair, and intollerable OPPRESSION.

Purify the Constitution. and the major part of these dangerous Republicans will become its Friends ; suffer it to continue the polluted instrument of Sinecure Rapine, and the veneration and attachment of its most virtuous and disinterested Friends will daily diminish ; for men of pure principles cannot long attach themselves to the most lovely object, when fallen into Vice and Prostitution.

Form does not constitute Character : it is not only distinct, but its influence is much weaker. The most pleasing Form cannot compensate defect of Character ; but Benignity of Character is daily seen to compensate Defect of Form.

Thus the ancient admirers of our Constitution, when they find its Form has survived its benign and genuine spirit, will shake off their prejudices in favour of its fair, but false exterior, and attach themselves to the Republican, or any other Form of Government that seems to them better calculated to fulfill the end of Society, It is not to France that they will look for a precedent, but to America.

The analogy between Sinecure and Popish craft is so forcibly striking, and so exactly just in every particular part, that I cannot help resuming it.

The Popish Priest forbids his disciple to read the *Scriptures*, and will not suffer him, in any respect, to use his *Reason*, which he calls a deceitful guide, in order that he may blindly confide himself to the guidance and direction of a Confessor, *interested in duping him*, which is not the case with regard to his own REASON. The

The Sinecure Placeman tells the People, that they must not read certain State Publications, or investigate Political Questions, because they are incapable to form an Opinion on them. He further tells them, that they now not when they are WELL, nor when they are ILL; nor where they should go, nor where they should STOP: that they would begin with Innovation, and end with Anarchy. In short, that they are unfit to be trusted with their own destiny, or to judge for themselves in any thing; wherefore, they must forego the use of Reason, and confide in such men as himself, *interested in misleading them.*

The aim of the Popish Priest is to stifle, to extinguish, if he can, the rational intellect of man, that Divine, immortal part of his Nature, by which he resembles, his Maker; and having succeeded, as he imagines, in brutalising the image of the Deity, he thinks that he may safely substitute the shadow for the substance, therefore, while he violates, in every instance, the true spirit of Christianity, he substitutes in its place the raree-show of outward Form and Ceremony.

In like manner the Sinecure Placeman perverts the pure and admirable spirit of our Constitution, whilst he preaches up an attachment to its exterior Form. He too has his raree-shows and his mummery, with which he hopes to fascinate the Multitude, whom he thinks to have degraded to a *Swinish State*; and this idle Pageantry, kept up for the same sinister purposes, he stiles *necessary State.*

Gracious Heaven! does Religion consist in Parade? Or is State the END of Government? Can it be *necessary* that distressful Poverty should pay its mite to sustain profligate LUXURY?

When hunger and nakedness, in Roman Catholic countries, are craftily diverted from revolting against oppression, by the awful presence of a supposed Divinity, the generous British heart is wrung with sympathising distress; But does not enormous *Taxation* produce also with us *Poverty and Nakedness*? And what difference is there whether a man, pampered at the Public cost, carries in procession a painted Image, or a gilded Stick? If such useless posts be honourable, let honour be their payment. The inferior parts of our Government, the most useful, extensive, and important, are conducted without charge to the People; why should not the superior? Ought not Courtiers to be ashamed, that Justices of the Peace, and Aldermen of Corporate Towns, should set them an example of Public Spirit? While such painful offices are filled with out reward; pension, and emolument are attached to others devoid of the smallest utility, and thus the Public Expenditure is swelled to at least *Seven* times what it might be reduced to, on a scale of **JUST NECESSITY.** *

The Popish Priest has inoculated the virus of corruption, on Religion itself, and has so incorporated them together, that he piously hopes whoever will attempt to separate them, must root out both.

It

(*) Mr. Paine says, that the Peace Expenditure may be reduced to one fourteenth part, a crime which Courtiers will not easily forgive him! I have only reckoned a seventh. As to the Monarch, if the Pension and Sinecure system were abolished, he would be really richer with 200,000*l.* a year than at present, and with regard to a standing Land Forcé, which seems only calculated to defend that system against the Nation, as our situation is **UNIQUE**, so the argument in its favour, drawn from the example of other Powers, is absurd.

It is evident that *Sinecure Placemen* have the same view. If *Machiavel* were alive, and consulted how to unite our Constitution with its Abuses, so that they should have the same existence, and the same destiny, he could not prescribe means more efficacious than those now pursuing.

As in the Roman Church, Heaven itself is let out to hire by him who pretends to keep the key, and the most worthless of mortals may for money be dub'd a Saint; so has it been remarked, that, under the *Sinecure System*, Seats in the Senate are like stalls in a market; and honours and dignities become vendible Commodities.

As the Roman Priest, when he has stripped man of his reason, and reduced him to a state more despicable than that of the brute, led by unerring instinct, makes him worship stocks and stones, and at last bow down before himself; so the *Sinecure Placeman* also sets himself up as an Idol of blind Worship: he teaches the People to *venerate* his vices, and to behold with awe, instead of *indignant mortification* his splendour supported at *their Cost*. This he calls *order*, and I call it a violation of all order, natural and moral. Like the Sculptor of Antiquity, who, as soon as he had finished a Statue of Jupiter, fell prostrate before it; the *Sinecure Placeman* expects that the People, rendered stupid by his artifices, will bow down before an ostentatious Image of their own creating, and idolatrously worship the *work of their own hands*. *

(*) As a man cannot be too careful at present to prevent his meaning being misconstrued, it is noted that what is here said of *Sinecure Placemen*, cannot be extended to Majesty. The Monarch, represents the Nation, and therefore the People, in honouring him, respect themselves; but for the same reason, in a just Monarchy, even royal ostentation is unnecessary; it is even an insult to the freedom and good sense of the People, to attempt imposing respect upon them by such means.

It will illustrate this subject to observe, that our Sinecure Minister, after having opposed the repeal of the Test Act; has granted indulgences to the Roman Catholics. This flows from congeniality of sentiment. Though he does not profess Popish tenets, yet he adopts Popish politics. The difference between the time of James the Second and the present is, that then Popish Tenets were endeavoured to be established without the Policy, and now the Policy without the Tenets †. It may also be observed, that the conduct of the present Minister is exactly similar to that of Pope Alexander the Third, at the first breaking out of the Reformation in the Thirteenth Century. Both appear to have dreaded the correction of Abuses and to have taken the same means to prevent it.

The first Reformers were the poor of Lyons or Albigeois, so called, because they quitted Lyons, to fix themselves at Albi, among the mountains in the South of France. These men, being illiterate, thought they could not do better than read the Scriptures, and copy in every thing the Primitive Christians. Like them they fled into the desert, used their goods in common, and were like them, poor, sober, mild, humble, and modest. These Evangelical virtues excited the indignation of the Pope, haughty, ostentations, avaricious and corrupt: Alexander, finding they would not recognize the monstrous abuses that had crept into the church, attacked

† James the Second had much Popish zeal, but not a grain of Popish policy. The Pope called him a blockhead, and said he would lose him the few remaining Catholics in England. Father Maubert even says, in his history, that he lent money to William to assist in dethroning him

attacked them with all the rancour that sordid interest and ambition do ever inspire, and succeeded by calumny and misrepresentation in rendering them odious. The chief instrument of his malice, was Dominick (*the Burke of that day*) who first calumniated these harmless men, then preached a Crusade against them, and obtained for his pains a celestial PENSION, after becoming on earth the head and founder of a rich Monastic Order. The Albigeois professed at first, according to the principles of Christian Charity, good will, peace and fraternity to all men;---they abhorred nothing so much as the *shedding of human blood*, and though some, less temperate than the rest, might wish to convert others to a system they held conformable to Evangelical Purity, yet the bulk made it a leading principle not to trouble the opinions of others, but to live in peace with all mankind. Such were the sentiments of these men, when they found themselves attacked by the Popish Crusade, the design of which, was avowed to be their utter extermination. Though these innocent men shuddered at shedding the blood of their fellow creatures, yet, finding they must perish in the field, or on the scaffold, Self-preservation, the first law of Nature, compelled them to take up arms, and resentment against *Oppression*, soon dissipated their first intentions, and rendered them cruel and sanguinary like their Enemies. St. Dominick had the art to paint the resistance of these men as a dreadful crime. The blood shed by them in their just defence, was held forth as the consummation of all horrors, whilst his own party, who forced such measures upon them shed the blood of the Reformers with impunity. The WAR continued near FIFTY YEARS, and at last ended in the extermination of a mere handful

handful of men, against whom, most of the neighbouring States had long leagued in vain. Rome triumphant, became more venal, and corrupt than ever; and to prevent a fresh Reformation from breaking out, the Pope established the Inquisition, and gave the government of it to the disciples of Dominick; but though the first Reformers were barbarously massacred, and their example, together with the fear of the Inquisition, had sealed the mouths of all those who dare to blame the Iniquities of the Roman Church, so that Reform was stifled for two centuries, yet it was impossible totally to extinguish the Light of Reason. Luther and Calvin appeared at last upon the stage, and, in spite of Papal Artifice, the Spirit of REFORMATION broke out again with renovated vigour,

It is not my design to justify all that has been done in France, but to point out the true cause and incitement; I therefore must mention here the laudable commencement of the French; their pacific inclinations; the moderation of their first Constitution; calumniated by venal pens; and the artful and bitter provocations of their enemies. The Convention of Pilnitz, the cruel Manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick, a War of Extermination undertaken against them abetted by Internal Treason, and sanguinary and violent means of defence *forced* upon them, are the succeeding gradations in this scale of Oppression. I have said Oppression, Mr, Editor, because the word is just; for to command a free, and independent People unconditionally to submit to the will of a misguided, impotent, perjured and prevaricating Despot, be not that Oppression, where does it exist? † Such was the

† That the Kings of France were despotic has never been disputed by any man, except Mr. Burke; and that the last was perjured, is proved by his own hand-writing, left behind him on his flight to Varennes.

state of the present question, when our Sinecure Minister thought fit *ostensibly* to shew himself a party in the Dispute, and since then it has become a subject that no man dare discuss, though every man must pay towards it; for to calumny, crusades and extermination, is added an inquisitorial restraint on the exercise of our reason, which may vie with that of the disciples of Saint Dominick. This only will therefore be observed, that such struggles never leave Power as they found it.

Sinecure influence and the Spirit of Reform are now pitted together, and the one must triumph over the other; if victory should declare for the former, abuses will be established for at least two centuries, as happened after the extermination of the Albigeois; for it is the height of folly to suppose, that the same artifices used by Sinecure Placemen at present, will be relinquished by them hereafter, when elated by success. On the contrary, to the present cry of endangering the Constitution will be added, that of reviving dangerous principles falsely imputed to the French, ‡ and thus the Sinecure System will be doubly entrenched and fortified. At present every plan of political amelioration is pretended to proceed from disaffection. The supporters of the Abolition of the Slave-trade have been called by some, *The enemies of Government*; and that harmless respectable body of men, the Quakers, have been abused, for exerting themselves against this infernal traffic. When vice and dissipation get uppermost, modest simplicity of manners is a tacit reproach; and even the garb of hum-

‡ The Principles imputed to the French, and about which so much noise is made, are not theirs, but were artfully put in, to the mouths of false Patriots, who have since been detected and executed, for being in the interests and pay of their Enemies, as will be shewn in my next.

ble virtue becomes offensive. If such things exist at present, what may not be expected, should success inflate Sinecure Placemen with still greater insolence? Surely so much blood and treasure are not lavished merely that these men may do voluntarily, at a future day, when none dare ask it of them, that which now being required of them, has thrown them into the agonies of rage and despair: no; their view is to render Reformation and object of horror and dismay: they would impress on this benign friend to mortals the features of a Fury, in hopes that men may shut the door against Salvation; fearing lest the most precious Reform, instead of bringing blessings in its train, should introduce discord and bloodshed, which are, in fact, but the consequences of *interested* resistance to its salutary effects; for after all *Interest* is the thing on which the whole turns, and has been at all times, and in all Countries the grand and formidable opponent of popular happiness. When the very name of Innovation shall make the hair stand erect in England, as that of Heresy does in Spain, and the convulsions exhibited by corruption on all such critical occasions as the present, be thought worse than the charge of feeding the Monster, fear will prolong its existence, in spite of Reason and Justice; and Sinecure Placemen, if they triumph and bring the people to this point, at which they evidently aim, will then reap in security the fruits of the blood and treasure now expended.

7 AP 66

And am &c.

NOVICE JOHN.

[illegible]